of bullet proof jackets by criminals in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take any action to check such misuse;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The matter is under consideration.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Coal production in West Bengal

1861. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state the reasons for decrease in coal production (Provisional) in West Bengal alone in 1997-98 when production in all the States has increased from 1996-97 estimate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): Besides West Bengal there has been reduction in production of coal in Assam also during 1997-98. The reasons for low production of coal in West Bengal during 1997-98 includes;

(i) Delayed supply of equipment for longwall faces in Jhanjra & Satgram.

(ii) Even after delayed receipt of longwall faces equipment for satgram, the same could not be installed due to agitation by local people demanding jobs and the same is now being transferred to Jhanjra.

(iii) Collapse of longwall support in Kottadih underground mine due to unforeseen dynamic weighting leading to stoppage of production from longwall face.

(iv) Stoppages of work on account of strikes/bandhs.

(v) Fund constraint arising from heavy losses being incurred by the company resulting in inability to provide timely supply of essential equipment & stores.

(vi) Decrease in off-take of coal has also affected the production programme adversely.

Demand and production of coal

1862. SHRI K. M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the present demand and production of coal; and

(b) the steps taken to supplement the shortage by the private sector coal companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Though the demand of coal assessed by the Planning Commission for the current year 1998-99 is 325.38 million tonnes of raw coal plus 7.50 million tonnes middlings, there is less demand of coal from consuming sectors in compaision to that projected originally. The target of coal production set for the current year has been 306.50 million tonnes.

(b) No shortage of non-coking coal is likely during the current year because of adequate supply of coal. The actual demand is less than what was estimated for the current year leading to the need for downward revision in coal production. However, thee production of coking coal is less than the demand. Steel plants are therefore, importing coking coal.